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TS-142631 ✓

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence 21 November 1955

SUBJECT : Project AQUATONE - Summary

1. The project was approved on 1 December 1954. Work was started on the airframe, engines, cameras [redacted] within a matter of weeks on the basis of oral understandings; contracts followed.

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2. The development and production of specialized equipment is in progress in nine different fields as follows:

High altitude long-range aircraft -- Lockheed Aircraft Company

An improved model of the J-57 Jet Engine -- Pratt & Whitney

Optics and cameras -- Perkin-Elmer Company and Hycon  
Manufacturing Company

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[redacted]

Specialized film and processing techniques -- Eastman Kodak Co.

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[redacted]

Electronic and celestial navigational systems -- Ramo-Wooldridge Co.  
and Baird Associates

New high altitude pressure suit and other personal equipment - - The  
Air Research and Development Command

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3. Chronology:

- a. Construction of test site authorized in late May; in use by mid-July.
- b. First aircraft flown 5 August; fourth delivered to the test base 21 November 1955.
- c. First camera configuration flown end of September; second test flown beginning early in November; third due in December.



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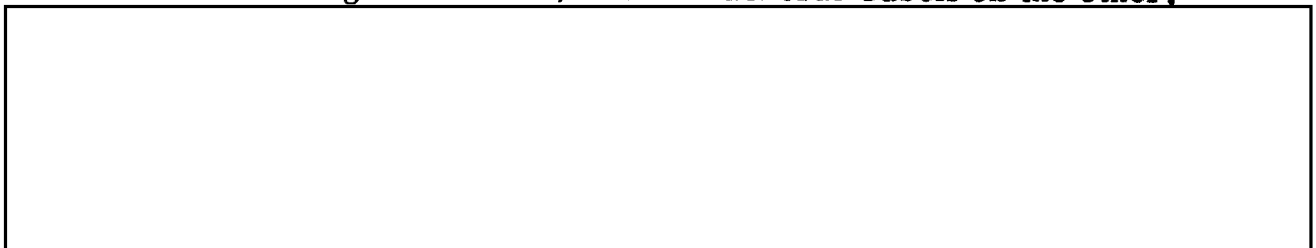
4. Performance: Aircraft has attained altitude  70,000 feet on six occasions. Cameras and electronic gear are functioning in a satisfactory fashion. Principal technical problems:

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- a. Fuel control to ensure reliable engine operation at altitude.
- b. Maintenance of air pressure in equipment bay sufficient for reliable camera operation.
- c. Navigational systems and techniques.

All three believed to be on their way to solution.

5. Status: Agreement with the Air Force on organization and lines of command concluded on 2 August 1955 provides for joint task force, predominantly civilian, technically within CIA but subject to direct control by Quarles and Twining on one side; DCI and General Cabell on the other.



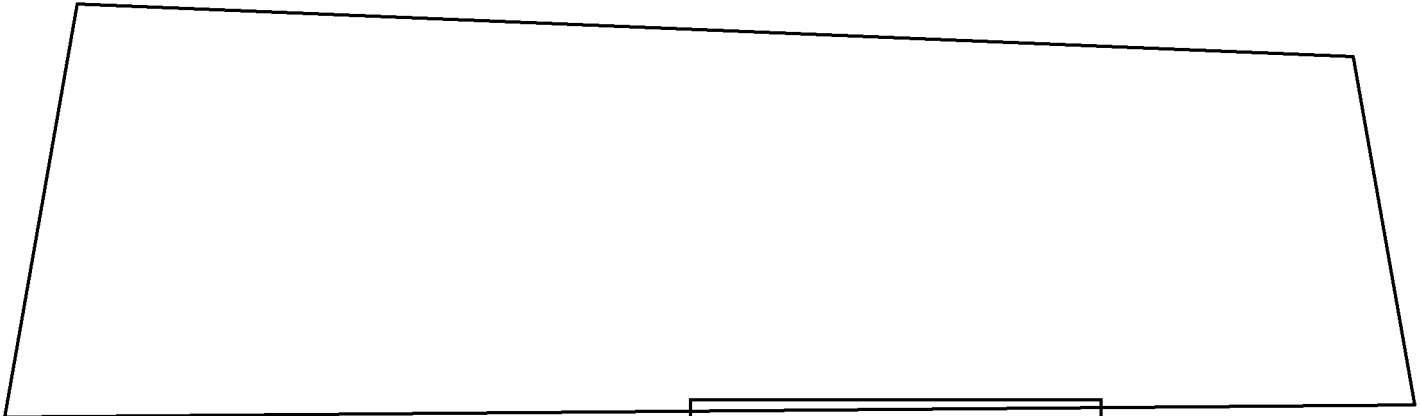
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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
Project Director

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